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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 001078

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2011

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SUBJECT: INDONESIA REACTS TO RELEASE OF CAVR REPORT

REF: 05 DILI 552 (GUSMAO OPPOSES IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF CAVR REPORT)

Classified By: B. Lynn Pascoe, Ambassador. Reason: 1.4 (b, d)

1. (C) Summary. Senior GOI figures and Indonesian politicians have reacted defensively to the allegations of human rights abuses made in the report of East Timor's Committee of Reception, Truth and Verification (reftel). East Timor President Xanana Gusmao presented the report to UN Secretary General Annan on January 20 and followed up with a

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statement to the Security Council on January 23. Although we understand that the document is primarily intended to promote reconciliation in East Timor, the GOI has taken it as an attack against Indonesia's reputation, and has reacted by rejecting Xanana Gusmao's request to meet with President Yudhoyono on January 27 and by strong-arming the bilateral Commission on Truth and Friendship (CTF) to postpone at the last minute a planned fact-finding mission to Dili. A commission member has told us that the postponement is to allow for a "cooling-off" period within Indonesia, but a commission meeting may be held in Bali on Feb. 1. The Ambassador reminded Presidential advisor Djalal of the continued need to address East Timor issues in a positive fashion. We do not think the current posturing by some politicians will derail the CTF's work. End summary

2. (SBU) GOI officials and politicians have reacted defensively to descriptions of the contents of the report by East Timor's Committee on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) presented to Secretary General Annan on January 20 in New York. The report covers human rights abuses committed during East Timor's civil war and occupation by Indonesia from 1975-98.

3. (C) Although the report has not been formally made public, GOI figures including government officials have dismissed and downplayed its accounts of abuses perpetrated by the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) under the occupation. Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono denied that the TNI had used napalm or used famine to perpetrate genocide. He went on to say that most of the other charges were rehashed allegations that had already been dealt with. TNI Commander In Chief Endriartono Sutarto said that the report probably exaggerated the number of civilians killed. He flatly denied that the TNI ever intentionally perpetrated human rights abuses against or killed East Timorese civilians during the occupation. Speaking to reporters in Tokyo on January 24, Vice President Jusuf Kalla similarly denied that Indonesia had ever committed human rights violations in East Timor. Department of Foreign Affairs Spokesman Yuri Thamrin tried to discredit the report, saying its recommendations were unrealistic and that its accounts of human rights violations had been provided by persons who were not even in East Timor at the time. Presidential Spokesman Dino Patti Djalal struck a more nuanced note, stressing that Indonesia's relations with East Timor were forward-looking and that past abuses are being addressed by the bilateral Truth and Friendship Commission (CTF). In a conversation with Djalal January 25, the Ambassador noted the importance of Indonesia facing the problem squarely and not straying from the need to address past events with a view to accountability and reconciliation. Djalal took the points on board.

4. (SBU) Some politicians' reactions were more vociferous. The Chairman of Indonesia's House of Representatives, Agung Laksono, called on the GOI to take "a firm stance" against East Timor President Xanana Gusmao for embarrassing Indonesia in front of the international community. PDI-P Caucus chair Thahjo Kunodo called for the GOI to break diplomatic ties with East Timor, citing the killing of three Indonesian citizens in an incident earlier this month on the border of the Oecussi enclave.

5. (C) An East Timor diplomatic source in Jakarta confirmed that the GOI had exerted pressure on this issue behind the scenes. In advance of President Xanana Gusmao's trip to New York, Dino Djalal had cautioned that President Yudhoyono was "concerned" about the release of the CAVR report to the SYG and the statement he was planning to make before the Security Council on January 23. Following Xanana Gusmao's meeting

with SYG Annan on January 20, the Presidential Palace formally turned down the East Timorese President's request for a meeting with Yudhoyono on January 27. Our source told us that Xanana Gusmao now hoped to smooth ruffled feathers

with a call to Yudhoyono during his upcoming stopover in Bali.

16. (C) The bilateral Commission On Truth and Friendship has also postponed a trip to Dili previously scheduled for January 29. An East Timorese member of the CTF told an officer at Embassy Dili that an Indonesian member of the CTF reported that the postponement was at the urging of the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs. The East Timorese diplomat in Jakarta said that the DFA wanted a "cooling-off" period of several weeks before the Dili trip took place.

17. (C) Indonesian commission member Ambassador Wisber Loeis told A/DCM Jan. 25 that the Indonesian commissioners had to take Indonesian "public opinion" into account and confirmed that the cooling-off period would be necessary before travel to Dili. The Commission had planned to consult with government officials, civil society organizations and leading opponents to the Commission in Dili, including the Roman Catholic Church, to help prepare the ground for future work. Loeis said the commission had been contacted by various parliamentarians and was sensitive to criticism within the Indonesian media. In the meantime, the Indonesian side was attempting to organize a commission meeting in Bali on Feb. 1 so that work would nonetheless continue in other areas. Loeis noted that the CAVR report would be an important one for the commission to review and take into account as the Commission's work moved forward.

18. (C) Comment: The temporary delay of the travel to Dili and the posturing by some Indonesian politicians notwithstanding, we believe that the work of the CTF will not be derailed. As reported in ref. B, President Yudhoyono told the Ambassador of the importance he attaches to the CTF's work and using it to help build better ties between Jakarta and Dili. End comment.
PASCOE